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CNRT

Timor-Leste

CNRT - FALINTIL

New Year Message

Companheiros da Luta! Compatriotas de Timor-Leste!

We are about to enter a new year in the struggle for the liberation of our Motherland, East Timor. For twenty three years our People have dedicated their energy, their indomitable courage, their determination and life itself to the sacred ideal of national independence.

It was because of this extremely long suffering and deep patriotism that our People have kept alive their Resistance against the shameful Indonesian invasion and the criminal military occupation of East Timor.

We knew since the beginning of the war that we faced a powerful enemy - the dictator/colonialist Soeharto regime. Despite being aware of the imbalance between us and the Indonesian invader we never, not even for a single moment, hesitated to continue struggling for our inalienable right to self-determination and national independence.

Many Indonesian generals are now retired, others were promoted at the expense of our People's blood, at the expense of the crimes perpetrated in East Timor.

We spent years of extreme hardship, we faced extremely difficult times. The grief and the tears, death and pain were but the bricks that built our steadfastness in the struggle and our faith in victory.

1998 was marked by a radical change in Indonesian socio-political life, with consequences for our own process. All of Indonesia trembled with the extraordinary social movement that shook the pillars of the repressive and corrupt *Orde Baru*!

The feeling that a moment of great hope had arrived was once again felt in East Timor. Euphoric attitudes took some people back to 24 years ago, forgetting the constraints of 1998's context. Our concerns gained their real dimension, not only because of the memories they brought back but also because of the way they reflected the vision of the future which awaits us. A mixture of fear and optimism took over all of us and warned us of all the possibilities which can lead our process to be an undesirable one.

And the more we stop to analyse the East Timorese social fabric, the more we are led to consider that we must avoid disastrous childish political attitudes.

For 24 years, we all demanded the right to self-determination and national independence for East Timor. A great number of strategies were designed, numerous ideas were developed: from the simple

return of Portugal to CNRM's Peace Plan and to a so-called "third way" which was never really elaborated.

The acceptance of CNRM's Peace Plan (dismissed by the "third way" as an "integrated autonomy") was never preceded by an in-depth study of its contents. Today, doubts arise over acceptance of an autonomy proposal. Today, more time is spent on debating time frames than on analysing and understanding our process.

We were suddenly struck by the turmoil of events in Indonesia and immediately set ourselves apart from Indonesia, forgetting the political constraints of the regime which goes on without significant alteration of the basic *Orde Baru* principles.

No effort is being made to try to understand, to try to analyse all aspects regarding the endeavours and the intention to solve the problem. Many are only thinking about a referendum, some even demand immediate independence. As if all the others did not yearn for independence, as if the others did not advocate a referendum as the most just way towards the solution.

As if we had all been struggling against Soeharto (who could have given us benefits through corruption) only to now yield to Habibie who faces a serious economic crisis that has thrown over 90 million Indonesians into desperate poverty and led to the sacking of over twenty four million workers.

It is regrettable that twenty three years after the beginning of the war for national liberation, people do not bother to spend some time thinking and analysing the process in order to understand it better.

Some people do not agree that 'it is necessary to politically educate our people' and argue that our people are politically prepared, the proof being that they resisted for 23 years. This is beside the point; these people are mistaking patriotism for political awareness.

Some are already concerned with power, worried about his/her Party and wishing to ensure a favourable political juncture for it. Because they see nothing but the Party, they are not able to see the interests of the Motherland, the interests of our People! Sometimes the word 'interest' is used as a synonym of 'yearning for independence'. They are unable to understand any further or discover the real dimension of the meaning of "the Nation's interests".

Still others emerge as the champions of realism, covering up their shame for not having done anything after receiving large sums of money from Soeharto in exchange for hindering the process of liberation of our Motherland. Such people are now drawing the (extra)ordinary conclusion that we are acknowledging that they were right, when they proved to be totally wrong in recognising the invasion and making a full 360º turn in their all-revolutionary 1974 ideology!

Today, opportunism appears in the guise of an extremely poor political protagonism. Mbak Tutut must be feeling ashamed for having had such money-thirsty friends willing to address great speeches in tribute to the Soeharto and Habibie regimes.

Well, this stage is drawing attention to the on-going political immaturity of so many, the so-called East Timorese politicians, when we ought to be thinking more carefully about the responsibilities we bear to put an end to the suffering of our People.

To put an end to the suffering of our People and not to permit it to be perpetuated. Too often we do not study the meaning of words, we do not know the semantics of some expressions. We learn sentences, slogans and mottoes by heart and then pronounce them without being fully aware of the real meaning they encompass.

Dear Companheiros da Luta!

Nevertheless, one must emphasise that what happened in our Motherland can be explained.

Our People are losing their patience; our People have lost faith.

Our People have lost faith in the UN; our People have concluded that UN resolutions no longer have any value; our People feel that the UN is only favouring Jakarta. Our People are led into thinking that the only way to free themselves is to increase the level of confrontation in East Timor.

Our People are tired of all the Jakarta lies; our People feel that the best way is to take advantage of the social, political and economic problems Indonesia is going through.

Our People know that the Soeharto/Habibie regime refuses to recognise the crime it perpetrated with the invasion and annexation of East Timor and that it lacks political will to find a solution. Our People can no longer stand Jakarta's on-going ill-faith because they know that serious, open and positive dialogue has always been rejected by the colonialist regime.

Our People's attitude is nothing but a legitimate reaction to Indonesia's on-going disregard for International Law, universal principles and the UN resolutions. Our People's attitude merely shows that Soeharto's ousting meant nothing for East Timor and that after all 'the flies have changed but the manure (=*Orde Baru*) remains'.

The attitude of our People is in itself proof of their disillusionment with the international community. The countries usually considered as the champions of democracy and human rights are apathetic to the democratic process in Indonesia and to the East Timor problem.

Many countries supported the Soeharto repressive regime by fuelling the corruption that led to Indonesia's bankruptcy. Today, those countries hardly lift a finger in favour of the democratic movement and, on the contrary, are looking only at prospects for new investments in an economically vulnerable Indonesia.

These countries that helped cast the Indonesian People into poverty are now salvaging a good relationship with Habibie, scrambling for the profits Indonesia promises as a bankrupt country. The values of democracy, justice and human rights remain an internal matter for Indonesia to grapple with, despite the fact that these values are alien to a regime undergoing a process of cosmetic reforms.

This interest-driven policy of the international community also has an impact on East Timor. The international community does not feel responsible for the fate of 200 million Indonesians, be it under the Soeharto or the Habibie regimes. Not to mention some seven hundred thousand East Timorese - it is a too small a number to deserve any consideration in terms of law and justice.

The Indonesian People are totally obsessed with putting Soeharto and his clique of generals and ministers on trial and are forgetting the role the international community has played in propping up one of the most corrupt and repressive regimes in the world. Whilst the international community is still looking at Indonesia as a market for major profits and a great number of consumers, the situation in Indonesia may lead to more intense political and social turmoil. We are concerned, the international community is not.

The same is happening with the East Timor problem!

We know how much Portugal has done so far in defence of our right to self-determination and national independence. We are also aware of the UN efforts, the commitment of the Secretary-General and the engagement of Ambassador Jamsheed Marker and his staff.

However, we are also aware of the constraints Portugal and the UN face in seeking a solution. The UN limits are due to the total disregard Jakarta has shown to this international organisation. And it is also due to the international community's indifference to increasing its pressure on Indonesia.

We appreciate and express our deepest gratitude to the US Congress and Administration, both of which have recently adopted a law recognising the right of the East Timor People to self-determination. We also appreciate and express our gratitude to the European Union for adopting a resolution supporting the holding of a referendum. However, reality is showing that it is not enough, that greater pressure must be brought to bear on Jakarta, not just to demand a more transparent and serious process of political reforms but also to seek a just and long-lasting solution for East Timor.

Companheiros da Luta!

A just and long-lasting solution! No solution is fully fair if it is not long-lasting, nor can a solution be long-lasting if it is not just. Just and long-lasting are two terms within the solution process we all seek for East Timor!

We have often, maybe hundreds, or even thousands of times, cried out for a just and lasting solution! We have used this expression so often that it is void of the meaning it deserves to have.

In conformity with International Law, a just solution can only be reached with the holding of a referendum! Without a referendum there is no just solution! But this is not enough! So that the solution may be lasting we must be concerned with and sensitive to a whole range of social and political issues regarding East Timorese society. Such issues will have a bearing on our future. Such problems, if not duly analysed and assessed, may lead to political instability, restless minds and a climate of social conflict.

We are aware that our People are beginning to show a lack of patience, that radical groups are emerging and will choose confrontation to break the current deadlock provoked by the arrogance of the Soeharto/Habibie colonialist regime.

We have already stated that we will not take advantage of the current (and on-going) political and social turmoil in Indonesia. In doing so, we wish to express our respect and solidarity with the struggle

for democracy and justice of the Indonesian people whose rights have been trampled on for 32 years by the *Orde Baru* regime!

Many people foresee greater instability and violence during 1999 in Indonesia. As the Commander-in-Chief of FALINTIL, I realise that we do not have the military capability to defeat and expel the occupying forces from our Motherland. But I know that we are capable of creating a greater and deeper instability throughout the territory, thus bringing about an even harder situation for Jakarta. And our motto would be 'Pátria ou Morte!' (Motherland or Death!). And there would be no more compromise.

Maybe I am a coward for not choosing this path. Or maybe I am just waiting to run out of patience with the intransigent attitude of the Indonesian generals, given the stubbornness of Indonesian politicians and diplomats.

I wish to state that CNRT took the following considerations into account: first, its responsibility to preventing an increase in the number of victims amongst the East Timorese population. Second, CNRT believes that dialogue is the best way to reach a (just and long-lasting) solution, via international means. Third, CNRT does not wish that independence may be the cause of conflict between the East Timorese themselves or between East Timor and Indonesia.

Some have been suggesting that we should prepare ourselves to proclaim independence if the situation in Indonesia gets out of control. I do not accept that idea; not because I do not want independence. I do not accept the idea because I have my own notion of independence. I do not wish to be witness to a chaotic type of independence, one which would lead to violence between brothers. We all understand that independence is a means and not an end in itself! Independence must guarantee peace, tranquility, harmony and safety to all, with no exception, so that everyone may be committed to national development and reconstruction. Independence must be forged in such a way as to ensure the best possible relationship of cooperation with our great neighbour - Indonesia.

Independence must not mean the closing of doors to the world. Independence is nothing more than the ability to be managers of our own destiny. For some politicians, to manage is to govern and to hold power in one's hands. To manage is an act which all the people will carry out through full participation in the Nation's future.

Our struggle for national liberation gave us more than enough time to study the history of Liberation movements around the world.

Many independent countries have yet to prove their understanding of the meaning of the 'right to manage the country's fate'; their leaders are now facing serious social and political problems and regrettable economic hardships. In those countries, independence did not bring peace and understanding to their citizens; independence, in those countries, did not help improve the living conditions of the population.

Indonesia itself mirrors this third world policy. Poverty and misery hide behind the beautiful buildings of metropolitan Jakarta. Fifty years after independence, social conflicts are almost intractable, external debt has reached 4 million rupiahs *per capita* and over 90 million Indonesians are living below the porverty line.

Above all, we must avoid the independence euphoria which always emerges in the wake of a war of liberation. If it is not one party claiming to have led the whole struggle, it is individuals who paint themselves as heroes, claiming that because they have worked the most and suffered the longest they deserve to be rewarded.

Independence is yearned for as a means of placing heroes in the leading bodies of the government. Independence is a way of showing who fought and who did not; independence is a way for people to dream for themselves or for their group, or party. Independence gains a new meaning: conflict of opportunities!

I am aware that the Peniche Convention brought bitter feelings to many East Timorese and that the composition of CNRT in East Timor was a disappointment to many politicians and heroes. We are not even independent yet and we are already thinking about who will be a minister and who should not be a minister. Even before becoming independent we are already trying to write our name in the Heroes' Book of Honour, the book of those who have done all, who have suffered the most. And we forget that the true hero is our People and the guerrilla fighters in the bush!

Independence is already loosing its character; independence is already concealing personal and group ambitions. It was common in third world countries for 'heroes' of the Liberation Movement to become 'heroes' of independence. In most cases this was a huge mistake. And it is from this mistake that the East Timorese should learn.

We should all understand that the Liberation of our Motherland is only the half way mark on the road to achieving the goal of independence.

However, independence can only enable the development of our initiative and creativity if all East Timorese can reassure themselves and everybody else that East Timor is for all and that in East Timor we can all live in peace and harmony. So that the just solution we will achieve may be a long-lasting one!

It is in this line of thought that I wish to clarify that if the CNRT has accepted the idea of autonomy it is not because we do not yet have the infrastructure or human resources that will guarantee our ability to re-build our Nation.

During the first three years after the invasion, our people showed extraordinary courage in mobilising themselves to face the war that Soeharto's generals waged against us. I believe that by living on cassava during the first five years we, the East Timorese, will be selling rice to the Indonesians a year later!

However, our problem is not as simple as it might seem! Today, feelings that separate, divide and lead to conflict between us still exist in East Timorese society, although at the National Conference, held in March 1981 we identified National Unity as a prime objective of our struggle; in 1986 we set up the Nationalist Convergence; in 1987, CNRM followed as a means of opening the way for new prospects of National Reconciliation, and CNRT's establishment represented a refinement of this process of uniting the East Timorese.

These are the wounds that must be healed. It is very easy for independence 'heroes' to think that tomorrow we will throw all integrationists into jail and that is it! Peace will prevail then!!! Will that really be Peace? If that what we yearn for? Those who killed ought to be killed? Those who arrested should be arrested? Those who tortured should be tortured? Those who stole should be stolen from? It is easy: they would be all thrown into jail. We will then crown ourselves with the glory of the great heroes of National Liberation!

The history of the third world is repeating itself: the leader of the resistance will end up as President, even if he is not up to the task; guerrilla commanders will be generals and politicians will strive to become ministers! All because we were the heroes. All because we worked hard, all because we suffered more than others! If this were to happen, it would be an outrage to the whole meaning of our struggle, the whole meaning of the sacrifices made by our people. It would be a betrayal!

Then these twenty three years of struggle did not put an end to bloodshed and violence! Our wish would be one for revenge and an appeal for justice to be done! These twenty three years were not enough for us to adopt a different political stance. After all, we fought for twenty three years without trying to understand politics!

The CNRT accepted the idea of autonomy for political reasons, because CNRT wishes to implement genuine National Reconciliation and not an AIETD-type of reconciliation. We need a period of time to eradicate every feeling of hatred and revenge and to create a genuine harmony based on mutual respect and democracy.

This is hard to achieve. CNRT rejects the easy way towards a solution and accepts the challenge of having to face the hard way! Because CNRT believes that all, veteran politicians or beginners, refuse to stain their hands with further violence in East Timor, where the victims will be the East Timorese themselves!

This is CNRT's commitment, this is my personal commitment!

If a majority votes for integration in a referendum, those who defend independence will be free to keep their opinion but will not have the right to provoke riots because of ideas. If the people choose independence in a referendum, the integrationists will continue being East Timorese and, as any other East Timorese, will rightfully live in East Timor if committed not to provoke instability in the reconstruction and development process of our Motherland!

CNRT does not dream about independence; CNRT can already see independence before its very eyes! Whether Habibie likes it or not, whether Wiranto may feel angry or not, whether Alatas feels furious or not! The independence of East Timor is an irreversible fact!

However, CNRT does not advocate an independence where the East Timorese will live in constant fear. When we proclaim independence, the East Timorese people will sing joyfully and feel genuine confidence in the future. No East Timorese will be cast aside, no East Timorese will feel alien to the process.
We do not accept autonomy with Indonesian involvement because we 'love' Indonesia or because we expect some sort of compensation from Jakarta. Indonesia has a responsibility to contribute to solution. Indonesia incited disagreement between the East Timorese, Indonesia must help the East

Timorese to reconcile! Only by doing so will Indonesia save its face! Indonesia cannot leave the East Timorese to kill each other just because a majority wants independence. Otherwise, the crime Indonesia perpetrated with the invasion and annexation of East Timor will multiply and be added to the shame of having created conflict and then abandoning the East Timorese.

A just solution must be combined with something else: it must be long-lasting. During the autonomy period as a transitional phase in preparation for a referendum, Indonesia will co-operate with the East Timorese in establishing a climate of total harmony guided by tolerance and mutual respect. If we can achive this, Indonesia will have fulfilled its responsibility to finding a just and lasting solution for East Timor. A just and lasting solution will be of mutual benefit to both countries, ensuring a future relationship of co-operation and mutual assistance.

If Indonesia is willing to co-operate in establishing a political climate of genuine National reconciliation, I believe that our people will close the book on the chapter of the past twenty three years! East Timor and Indonesia will then open a new chapter of History, with their eyes set on a future of peace in the region, as a contribution to world Peace!

This is our people's commitment, because the East Timorese people wants to live in genuine peace and prosperity for the sake of their children.

Companheiros da Luta!

Let us concentrate on the problems we face and be concerned with future problems if we are serious about overcoming the current ones. Instead of discussing time frames, be they a month, six months, a year, two, three or ten years, let us concentrate on understanding the issues placed before us so that we may make decisions; the fate of our Motherland must be our prime concern.

An erroneous analysis of the situation has led the people of East Timor to take sides: either with those who defend autonomy or with those who defend a referendum.

Those who defend the holding of a referendum forget that CNRT 'accepts' autonomy as a period of transition in the lead up to a referendum.

What I can guarantee to all is that if Indonesia is to continue with its arrogance and inflexibility, insisting on autonomy as a final solution, there will be no autonomy in East Timor.

What I can guarantee is that before there is autonomy established in East Timor, our people will be enlightened as to the true meaning of autonomy and its representatives will only sign an agreement if it is in the interests of the People. There will be no autonomy without the agreement of the East Timorese. And our motto would be: "The struggle continues on all fronts! No truce!"

I have stated in a former message that it will all depend on the political stance adopted by the Habibie government; a government which so far seems to be an extension of Soeharto's colonial-expansionist regime!
If the Habibie government does not have the political courage to recognise Soeharto's mistake, East Timor will remain a UN question; and when we lose our patience there will be no concern about

saving Indonesia's face! Indonesia's face is stained with the blood of the Indonesian people and of over 200,000 East Timorese!

The Soeharto regime used to say that the clock of history cannot be turned back; we say that the clock is running far too fast for Indonesia's rulers and their desperate bid to maintain the status quo!

Companheiros da Luta!

My personal opinion is that Jakarta is not ready to move forth in a constructive way in the negotiation process during 1999. The Habibie colonialist government does not wish to find a solution for East Timor which will respect International Law; until today, it has shown the arrogance which is typical of colonialists by stating that what they did was legal and therefore, it is up to Portugal to recognise Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor.

I am certain of one thing: 1999 will be yet another year of deadlock. We, the East Timorese, will have to wait for a new truly democratic government to be installed.

I will not call for an increase in tensions in our Motherland, nor for a greater level of confrontation with the occupying forces. One day we might have to make a decision on this if after the elections nothing changes in Indonesia and if the *Orde Baru* regime prolongs the current status quo!

But not now! Let us concentrate on focussing our efforts on achieving:

a) an end to military hostilities
b) a climate of greater political tolerance

This stance aims at preventing further East Timorese casualties. The occupiers are arming the East Timorese and telling them to kill their own brothers and sisters. Instead of allowing ourselves to be consumed by anger let us make an effort to think in a balanced political manner. Otherwise, we will be playing the colonialist's game; we will be reinforcing the Indonesian argument that the East Timorese are threatened with a new civil war.

Politically we have not yet been able to neutralise these ancient tactics of the enemy: divide and rule. But the problem does not lie solely in the division; the problem is that they divide and distribute weapons to kill our own brothers and sisters.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that all those who are instigating physical violence between Timorese are doing nothing more than helping the enemy to remain in East Timor. Whether they are aware of it or not, those who provoke conflict between the East Timorese do not wish for a speedy solution to the East Timorese problem.

Let us all accept the responsibility for creating a climate of political tolerance. Only such a climate will enable us to meet the challenge of initiating the process of conceiving ideas and plans and of starting to implement them.

Let us all try to be politically mature, let us avoid imitating the ways of 1974's "politicians". Let us learn from our own mistakes before looking at those made in other countries. Let us try to be ourselves,

mature in our political thinking, knowledgeable about our own process and capable of an objective analysis of reality.

Let us not be bullies just because we carry some memories from the bush, nor let us be heroes just because we are holders of a 'long experience' diploma. Let us not be demanding just because the 'world' does not recognise our work or our sacrifices, nor act with pride because we can now lead or represent groups or parties.

Let us be humble in this struggle, because it does not belong to any single individual. The struggle has always been of the people! Let us not allow the meaning of our struggle to be sullied by personal ambition. The interests of the people must always stand above everything else. No matter how much or whom it may hurt, as the FALINTIL Commander, and in order to defend the supreme interests of our People, I will not hesitate to make the decisions that may better serve our heroic People!

1999 must be the year of a new political dynamic. 1999 must be the year for rethinking attitudes and for redoubling our commitment to achieving a positive future for our Motherland.

Instead of just waiting for a referendum or autonomy, let us educate ourselves to realise that it is we, the East Timorese, who bear the enormous responsibility for solving our own problems; that it is up to us, the East Timorese, to formulate ideas, design plans and seek the means of bringing them to fruition.

1999 must be the year of joining forces in preparation for the challenges of the future!

Pátria ou Morte!
A Luta continua em todas as frentes!
Resistir é vencer!

President of the CNRT,

Signed

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
FALINTIL Commander-in-Chief

Cipinang, 31st December 1998.-

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